

Indian Agency House
Route 1, near Silver Lake
Shawnee County
Kansas

HABS No. KANS-12

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
120 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

INDIAN AGENCY HOUSE
Route 1, near Silver Lake
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Present Owner: A. E. Moore, Route 1, Silver Lake, Kansas.

Present Occupant: Owner.

Present Use: Residence

Brief Statement of Significance: This stone house, said to be a former Indian Agency building, is perhaps the earliest structure built by white men still standing in Kansas.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:
 - U. S. Government
 - Chief Lewis Henry Ogee - by patent - 81 acres
 - George Greenwood and son
 - A. E. Moore - purchase - 1941
2. Date of erection:
 - 1826 or 1827 (McCoy, M. E., Brief History of Agency House Kansas Indian Agency Near Silver Lake, Kansas, Topeka, Kansas, May 18, 1940. See Part I, D. Supplemental Material, for a copy of this document.)
3. Architect, builder, suppliers etc.:
 - Major Angus L. Langham of the Pioneer Corps, U. S. Army, organized a field party to establish the agency. The stone was quarried apparently from a location 8 miles from the building site. (See McCoy, M. E., Ibid., p. 3.)
4. Original plans, construction etc.: None located.
(See Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated, Part I, C.)
5. Notes on alterations and additions: None
6. Important old views and references: None located.

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B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

This is said to have been a Kansas Indian Agency House as early as 1826, which would make it the earliest known structure in the Kansas Territory. John C. Fremont of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, U. S. Army, cut a cross (+) into the water table in the north wall of the northeast corner of the building. This mark was used as a triangulation point in 1853. (See McCoy, M. E., Ibid., p.4 .)

C. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

Bureau of Indian Affairs, U. S. Dept. of Interior,
Washington, D. C.

At the National Archives, Old Army Section, Washington, D. C.

look for: Records concerning Major Angus L. Langham, a military engineer of the Pioneer Corps, U. S. Army, c. 1825-8
Survey of J. C. McCoy, Civil Engineer, 1836, a resurvey of Kansan Indians Reservations
Notes of John C. Fremont, Corps of Topographical Engineers, U. S. Army, 1853

D. Supplemental Material:

/Original typescript in possession of A. E. Moore, Route 1, Silver Lake, Kansas/

BRIEF HISTORY OF AGENCY HOUSE

KANSAS INDIAN AGENCY NEAR SILVER LAKE, KANSAS.

Pursuant to a treaty signed June 3rd, 1825, between the United States Government and the Kansas (Kaw) tribe of Indians, a sub-tribe of the Dakotah, certain lands were designated under Article Number Five (5) as a reservation containing One Thousand Six Hundred (1600) square miles which was to be surveyed and the boundaries and corners marked, as soon thereafter as a surveying party with suitable equipment, supplies and escort could be organized, and moved into the territory. Thereafter on September 14th, 1825, a special order was issued to the commanding officer at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, directing the designation of Major, Angus L. Langham, a Military Engineer, of the Pioneer Corps, U. S. Army to prepare appropriate requisitions for the necessary equipment and supplies. Troops "E" and "F" of the 2nd U. S. Cavalry were detailed as escort. The post quartermaster was directed to furnish ten (10) escort wagons and camp and Garrison equipment for an expedition of Three Hundred (300) men for a period of two (2) years.

The intendent of Indian affairs secured and sent to Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, the necessary personnel to establish an agency to the Kansas tribe of Indians.

All preparation having been completed, the Field Party began the march into the Indian Country, March 9, 1826. On April 11th, they crossed the Topeka River by way of the Grinter Ferry, into Nebraska.

After spending several days at the Delaware Indian Agency, the march up the Topeka River was resumed, On April 21st, arriving at the Winter Quarters of the Kansas Indians on the North Bank of the Topeka River, May 1, 1826. (Note-- It is believed the site of the Indians Town was the location now occupied by the Town of Silver Lake, Kansas.)

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How the site of the agency location was decided upon is not known, but is believed to have been selected on account of the Kansas Indians, Stomp grounds at which they held their rendezvous, prior to, and long after, the location of the Agency House.

While the quarry men, laborers and teamsters were assembling material for the Agency Buildings, Major Langham and his party consisting of Antoine Moutier, head chairman, Gabriel Constant, rear chairman, Joseph Denoyer, head marker and Francois Duquette, rear marker, began the location and survey of the reservation for the Kansas Indians.

The Agency House and other buildings were started during the summer of 1826 and finished during the early spring months of 1827, as Major Langham refers to the completion of building operations by the time he completed surveys for the Kansas Half Breed Indians, who claimed grants of one section of land based upon the North bank of the Topeka or Kansas River. (Note--during 1826, Major Langham, at all times refers to this stream as the "Topeka River". After February 7th, 1827, he designated the stream as the "Kansas River". Under Article Number Five (5), of whom there was twenty-three (23). The survey of the twenty-three reserves was begun February 1st, 1827, and completed March 20th, 1827.

Major Langham described in his notes the location of the stone quarry and the road over which stone was hauled, and a bridge across a stream which he refers to as Nea-Tush-Ta Weah--which is the Indian name of the stream now called Little Soldier Creek; part of the bridge which he described is still in place though its exact location was not known until September 1939, when it was located.

No record was made of how they crossed Nea-Tush-Ta (Soldier Creek) so it presumed that passage was made by ford. It appears from the Record that the stone used in constructing the agency buildings were quarried on land afterwards allotted to John Boatman. (The N.1/2 of the S.E.1/4, Section 13, Township 10, Range 14) now owned by Walter T. Pence, (1940). No explanation is made for hauling stone this distance, approximately eight miles.

During 1836, J. C. McCoy, a Civil Engineer, re-surveyed the lines of the Kansas Indians Reservation and the Kansas Half Breed Indian Lands. In his notes he makes reference to notes of Major Angus L. Langham, of which he had a copy, and to the Kansas Indian Agency, stating the time and place of their construction which he refers to as 1826-1827. During 1838-1839 while laying off the townships East of the 6th P. M. and locating the second (2nd) Standard Parallel South reference is again made in the notes to an old Ford across Nea-Tush-Ta

believed to have been made by Major Langham. This ford sixty-three (63) HABS links southeast of the quarter section stone on the south line, Section KANS Number Thirty-Six (36) Township Ten (10) South Range Fourteen (14) East 89-SILV.U. as being a rock paved Ford and the road being in a Northeasterly, South-westerly direction which corresponds to the location of the Langham's road though Major Langham makes no record of a Ford.

Again in the notes of John C. Fremont, of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, U. S. Army, reference is made to the Stone Building as the Agency House of the Kansas Indian Agency. After describing the Stone House he states, "A cross (+) was cut in the foundation ledge. Two (2) feet above the ground on the North wall at the Northeast corner of the building which mark was used as a tri-angulation point. The elevation of the cross was given as 911.34' M.T.S.L." (Main-tide Sea Level) These notes were dated 1853.

During the summer of 1862, the reservation of the Kansas Indians was sectionized.

The survey and division of Township Eleven (11), south Range Fourteen (14) East of the Sixth (6th) Principal Meridian was commenced August 4th, 1862 and completed September 6th, of that year.

Section Fifteen (15), Township Eleven (11) South, Range Fourteen (14) East of the 6th P. M. was located and marked August 20th, 1862.

Some members of the Kansas Indians elected to take allotments of land in the Kansas Indian Reservation, Land patents were granted in various amounts to such as had "Head Rights" in the reservation. The Southeast one-fourth (1/4) section Fifteen (15), Township Eleven (11), South, Range Fourteen (14) East of the 6th P.M. was patented in the name of Lewis Henry Ogee. When the public highway now known as the Silver Lake Road (U. S. 24) was located, it was found that the old "Agency House" was built so near the E-W 1/4 Section line that the house would be in the road, right of way, in preference of destroying the oldest land mark in this part of Kansas, the highway was located North of the Quarter Section line through the East one-half of Section Fifteen (15), Township Eleven (11), Range Fourteen (14).

The "Agency House" has been in constant use since its construction in 1826 and 1827. It is in a splendid state of preservation not withstanding the flood of 1844, the walls are still as good as when built. This house is now owned by A. E. Moore.

The fact that this bit of history concerning this old building has been taken from "Field notes of early surveys and reports of surveyors accounts for the lack of detail concerning the Agency House, and the men who built it.

Hoping these brief notes will be of interest. I beg to remain to the unknown persons who has requested this recital of records.

Very Respectfully,

M. E. McCoy, Civil Engineer

Topeka, Kansas.
May 18, 1940.

Part I prepared by W. Noffsinger date 7/58

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATIONHABS
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A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character:

A typical Territorial building of stone construction, which may be the earliest architecture by white men in this area.

2. Condition of Fabric:

The walls are well preserved but the interior has been modified and is not well maintained.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Foundations:

The foundations are of native limestone. The thickness of the foundation wall is about twenty-four inches.

2. Wall construction:

The walls are built of limestone and are about eighteen inches thick. Cut and dressed stone is used for the water table, window sills, thresholds and lintels.

3. Porches:

The front porch is not original (per old photograph, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas, Photograph Division, Silver Lake File). The back porch is probably an addition. Both porches are single story and are of wood construction.

4. Chimneys:

Brick. The chimney on the east is in its original condition but the chimney on the west wall has been replaced and now runs on the exterior of the building.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: Painted wood frame for doorway has simple molding. Wood panelled doors of pegged construction are probably original.

b. Windows and shutters: Twelve pane pegged wood sash windows are original but the pegged wooden shutters are said (by A. E. Moore, present owner, in an interview June 24, 1958) to be about 1880 in date.

6. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: Gable roof now covered with asphalt shingles.

b. Cornice, eaves: These are of simple design and constructed of wood.

c. Dormers: None.

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7. Supplemental Information: None.

C. Technical Description of Interiors:

1. Floor Plans:

Central hall plan with parlor, kitchen and living room on the first floor and three bedrooms and a modern bath on the second floor. (Mr. Moore, present owner built the bathroom and the small window for it.)

2. Stairways:

The stairway is located on the west side of the central hall. The handrail is original but the ballusters are of two different designs.

3. Flooring:

The first floor is not original. Owner (A. E. Moore, interview June 24, 1958) states that the second floor is original.

4. Wall and ceiling finish:

Plastered with wallpaper covering.

5. Doorways and doors:

These are of standard panelled design and are mostly original. The material is wood with pegged construction.

6. Trim:

A very simple wooden trim was utilized.

7. Hardware:

Many different items - probably few, if any, are original.

8. Heating:

In the original house fireplaces were located in the two main downstairs rooms and the two upstairs bedrooms. Now a modern gas heating system has been installed. -

9. Lighting:

None of the original remains. Electric wiring has been added.

10. Supplemental Information: None.

Part II prepared by J. D. Noffsinger date 7/58

PART III. OTHER INFORMATIONHABS
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A. Site:

1. General setting and orientation:
Flat lot along U. S. Highway 24. Front of the building faces north to the highway.
2. Enclosures:
A modern iron fence exists along the highway.
3. Outbuildings:
Modern sheds and a garage exist on the lot. All are wood frame.
4. Walks: None.
5. Landscaping:
Scattered trees exist on the lot and a cinder driveway leads off the highway to the garage.

B. Supplemental Material: None.

Part III prepared by JP Noffsinger date 7/58